

In 1985 the Office for Planning and Programming in Iowa was dissolved by the governor and the legislature. That office provided an umbrella to oversee eighteen state agencies and twenty-eight boards, councils and committees which were concerned with one or more aspects of land resource allocation or planning. For the past twenty-five years Iowa has had no one agency which is aware of land use planning or programming in our state. Land use is an activity with pervasive effects on almost all facets of growth, development and environment.

This void is evident in every area of the state. The lack of a state office which is in touch with local governments across Iowa was never so evident as in the aftermath of the 2008 floods as we sought to coordinate efforts in local communities in Eastern Iowa. 1000 Friends of Iowa's recommendation is to **establish an Office of Sustainable Planning and Programming once again to coordinate Iowa's land use planning and management, coordinate state agency efforts, cut costly repetitive programming and fill an obvious void for Iowa.** This office would serve as a link and support to every city government in the state. It would serve as an information clearing house and repository for GIS, coordinate cooperative planning efforts to eliminate waste and redundancy. We agree that all planning begins locally. Establishment of a lead agency for Iowa's 948 cities and 99 counties to look to for guidance on how to plan and implement smart growth principles and coordinate growth statewide could never be as timely as it is now. Iowa's Council of Governments do not exist in all areas of the state at this time. Iowa has 18 RPA and nine MPOs. However, there is no state agency to serve as an umbrella to coordinate all these efforts. Smart growth saves money, resources and builds cooperation. Iowa needs to embrace a serious plan to grow responsibly, by forming a department at the state level to store and review comprehensive plans to be sure that Smart Planning Principles are being met. Small communities and rural counties have little means to afford professional planning. The Office of Sustainable Planning and Programming would administer technical and financial assistance for comprehensive planning. The department would conduct research and disseminate information.

Planning to avoid flooding is simple. Let floodplains be floodplains. Levees have been used for more than a century in an attempt to control floods. Levees are prone to failure. Flood control reservoirs can store large amounts of water but they eventually fill up with silt and dams fail, e.g. Delhi. Designated floodway boundaries are based on historical data and local governments are slow to revise them after new record floods. Local governments are lured in to believing that floodways protect buildings in the rest of the floodplain. They don't. Climate change is causing increased rainfall in Iowa. Many Iowans and our decision-makers don't believe in climate change but the increases in rainfall can't be denied. After the 1993 flood in Ames, city officials said that Ames would never experience a flood of that magnitude in their lifetime. Many of us lived to see another one in 2010.

In the Des Moines Lobe, alone, there are 5 million miles of drainage tiles. Cities have installed storm sewers and paved over the landscape with impervious surfaces. Even if we had kept all of the wetlands that were here before all of this drainage, we probably would have experienced flooding in 1993 and 2010. So the cheapest and most practical

solution is: don't build in the floodplain and begin the process of gradually moving development that is presently in the floodplain, out. In order to fulfill these simple goals we will need state oversight and outreach for education and funding opportunities coming from a dependable source whose sole focus is outreach to communities concerning smart planning.

In the past two years, HUD allocated more than \$642 million to Iowa because of flooding for flood mitigation. Dave Swenson, ISU Economist, found that close to \$2.4 billion in federal aid was spent in Iowa to either restore households, assist businesses, repair or restore public facilities, or otherwise aid in the relief effort.

Our inability to coordinate our planning efforts is costing Iowans and American citizens tax dollars in addition to what homeowners, businesses, communities and our entire state has lost. Iowa can no longer afford to ignore coordinated comprehensive planning that upholds the Smart Planning Principles. The expense of recreating the Office of Sustainable Planning and Programming pales in comparison to the cost of not having a state department dedicated to coordinated comprehensive planning.

Place the Office near the state Capitol and maintain an enhanced GIS clearinghouse from the State Library. I have heard that a comprehensive GIS library is already maintained at ISU by Kevin Kane. We will want to contact him at [kkane@iastate.edu](mailto:kkane@iastate.edu) to learn about what already exists at ISU. The RIO staff has done an excellent job coordinating the effort to plan for the future. Staff should be considered to carry out the mission they have done such an excellent job in defining.

Farmland protection is not being adequately addressed presently in Iowa. Iowa has .098 percent of the world's land mass and yet is home to 10-25% of the world's finest soils according to the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service. That makes our soils a global treasure when coupled with timely rains and our climate. Presently, the age of the farmland owner is increasing at a rapid rate. In Iowa, the percent of land owned by people over the age of 75 has risen from 12 percent in 1982 to 27 percent in 2007. The percent of land owned by people between 65 and 74 has increased from 17 percent to 27 percent. This means that more than half the farmland in Iowa is owned by someone over the age of 65. Within the next twenty years it could be owned by out-of-state heirs who don't care to invest their profits off the land into costly conservation efforts which preserves water quality and our soils. I have attached a report by Mike Duffy which is contained in our newsletter. When 1000 Friends questioned staff at the governor's office about this issue, they weren't aware of the statistics. We need comprehensive planning coordination throughout the state that protects farmland.